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C O N F I D E N T I A L HELSINKI 001209

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: FINNISH REACTION TO PRE-GAERC DEMARCHE

REF: SECSTATE 208899

Classified By: POLOFF DAVID ALLEN SCHLAEFER FOR REASON 1.4 (B) AND (D)

1. (C) Poloff delivered reftel demarche to Tanya Jaaskelainen, Deputy EU Correspondent in the MFA's Unit for EU Common Foreign and Security Policy. The points were also sent to the EU Coordinator in the Prime Minister's Office. Jaaskelainen said that Finland would focus on the MEPP, Kosovo, and Ukraine at the Nov. 21-22 GAERC. She also commented on Syria.

2. (C) MEPP: Finland welcomed the "Agreement on Movement and Access" announced by the Secretary on Nov. 15. Garnering sufficient financial and logistical support for the EU mission in Rafah is an important next step. Finland will contribute to the Rafah mission and urge other EU countries to do the same. It is important that the momentum established by the Rafah agreement be maintained; Gaza is a good beginning, but not the endgame. The EU and US must continue to work with Israel to address the full range of outstanding issues related to the Occupied Territories.

3. (C) Kosovo: The GoF is pleased that the EU quickly responded to UN Special Envoy Ahtisaari's request for support by appointing Stefan Lehne as EU Special Representative. The Finns welcome a pending announcement of a U.S. Special Envoy. Jaaskelainen remarked that the U.S. has supported Ahtisaari strongly in his prior missions on behalf of the international community, especially during the successful Aceh talks, and that the GoF was confident that he would continue to receive such support from Washington. Finland aims to keep the EU ministers focused on the issue with a view toward providing maximum EU support and cooperation for Ahtisaari.

4. (C) Ukraine: Finland shares U.S. concern about the slow pace of WTO-related reform and anti-corruption measures. The U.S. and EU must work in tandem to encourage greater energy toward reform in Ukraine. Trans-Atlantic consultation is important in order to avoid duplication of programs and ensure maximum effect.

5. (C) Syria: The GoF agrees that it is important for Syria to cooperate fully with the UN investigation. Finland has supported strong EU statements about this. The GoF (and EU) has a different perspective as regards isolating the Syrians, however. Total isolation may lead to missed opportunities to encourage the Syrians to cooperate on the Hariri investigation and on other issues, including support for militants in Lebanon.

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